



NOAA, NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE, WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE

Miami, Florida 33165

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MIAMI FORECAST OFFICE ANNOUNCES RAINY SEASON OUTLOOK

WETTER THAN NORMAL RAINY SEASON LIKELY

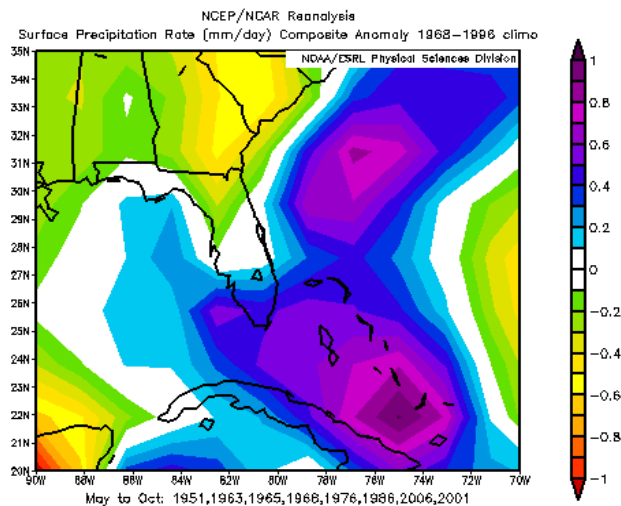
April 29, 2009: The National Weather Service's Miami-South Florida Forecast Office announced its outlook for the upcoming rainy season. The outlook calls for an increased likelihood of above normal rainfall for the period from May through October, encompassing the South Florida rainy season. The wetter than normal rainy season forecast is based primarily, but not exclusively, on correlations between global weather patterns, particularly [ENSO \(El Niño Southern Oscillation\)](#) and their effect on South Florida weather.

ENSO is divided up into three phases, La Niña (cold Pacific Ocean sea surface temperatures), El Niño (warm Pacific Ocean sea surface temperatures) and Neutral (near normal Pacific Ocean sea surface temperatures). La Niña has been in control since 2007, which has contributed to the [current drought conditions](#) over South Florida. [Current trends indicate that this La Niña episode is coming to an end, with Pacific sea surface temperatures rising to near normal levels.](#)

Computer model forecasts suggest that Pacific sea surface temperatures will continue to rise, perhaps to weak El Niño levels by late summer or fall.

Looking back at years in which an early La Niña transitioned to neutral or weak El Niño conditions, the tendency is for a wetter than normal rainy season over South Florida. The following image shows the average rainfall departures from those

years and reflects this wetter than normal tendency:



(blue/purple denotes areas of wetter than normal rainfall)

Other factors come into play in determining how much rain will fall over the course of the rainy season, such as effects from any tropical storms or hurricanes, as well as any large but disorganized tropical disturbances which may affect our region. In the absence of any of these systems, summer rainfall patterns can vary widely over South Florida, with some areas seeing significantly more or less rainfall than nearby locations.

The outlook for wetter than normal conditions would be beneficial as far as improving or ending the current drought across South Florida is concerned. The average start of the rainy season is May 20 to May 27, with east coast locations typically starting earlier than western locales. Even with an early start to the rainy season, drought conditions will be slow to improve until the normal summer rainfall patterns become well established. This also means that the [extremely high fire danger levels](#) being observed over South Florida will not significantly improve until sometime in June at the earliest.

The latest drought and water conditions can be monitored by visiting our [drought information page](#). You can also check the [latest outlooks by the Climate Prediction Center](#) for updates on long range precipitation and temperature trends/forecasts.

All residents of South Florida are strongly urged to heed the advice of local officials regarding water usage and wildfire prevention, as drought and fire danger levels can rapidly deteriorate during the last few weeks of the dry season (early to mid May). Please visit the [Miami-South Florida Forecast Office's web site](#) for daily forecasts, statements and warnings.